



Town of Lexington

Police Department

Subject: Ancillary Motorist Services

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Annually

By Order of: Mark J. Corr, Chief of Police

Policy & Procedure

61D

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

This policy establishes guidelines for the delivery of many diverse traffic-related ancillary services provided by the Lexington Police Department. These services are basically activities having an indirect effect on traffic flow as well as those that are in response to citizen generated requests for assistance.

The public often relies upon the police for roadway assistance in routine and emergency situations, which occur on a daily basis. For this reason, the police regularly respond to incidents where it is not contemplated that an arrest or other enforcement action will be required. In addition to requested services, officers should employ diligent patrolling practices which will allow the officer to locate, in a timely manner, motorists in need of assistance.

PROCEDURES

A. Ancillary Services

1. The Lexington Police Department will provide reasonable general assistance to all highway users who appear in need of aid. This will apply at all hours of the day, but particularly during the nighttime hours and during hazardous weather conditions. The aid may include:
 - a. Providing information and directions;
 - b. Assisting stranded or disabled motorists by providing a communications link with needed services;
 - c. Assisting motorists in obtaining timely mechanical assistance such as vehicle repairs, tire changing assistance or related services; and/or

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- d. With the approval of the Commanding Officer or Patrol Supervisor, officers may transport fuel, which is needed by a stranded motorist.
2. Officers shall be constantly alert for motorists who appear to need assistance. Whenever possible, officers shall stop and offer their services to motorists unless the officer is:
 - a. In the process of apprehending a violator of the law;
 - b. Answering a call for service; or
 - c. En route to fill a priority assignment.
 - d. NOTE: If an officer is unable to stop and assist a motorist, the officer should notify the police station so that other available police units may be dispatched.
3. In order to avoid injury to Department members or damage to police vehicles, Town vehicles shall not be used to:
 - a. Push or tow disabled motor vehicles from a roadway;
 - b. Jump start disabled motor vehicles; or
 - c. Siphon gasoline.
4. If a motorist requires mechanical or towing services, officers should:
 - a. Assist the motorist in contacting a towing agency of his/her choosing (i.e. AAA); or
 - b. Notify a towing agency approved by the Town of Lexington for the immediate removal of the vehicle.
5. A list of approved towing agencies is available at the front desk of the police station. This list information may be relayed to persons in need of a towing service. All providers on the list meet the following minimum requirements:
 - a. Drivers for the companies have been checked regarding their criminal background and sexual offender background (CORI/SORI);
 - b. The companies have sufficient towing capability and storage facilities; and
 - c. Each company meets state regulations for towing.
5. Officers may, with approval from the police station, transport stranded motorists to the nearest convenient location where assistance may be obtained. Officers should not leave the motorist until assistance is available, absent a priority call.

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6. Officers shall freely and politely provide information and directions upon request. To provide information accurately, officers should become familiar with the streets, highways, services and facilities in the area. When providing information officers should:
 - a. Never recommend one business establishment over another similar and competing business; and
 - b. Refrain from making comments tending to cause ill will between the Department and the business community.

B. Emergency Services

1. Motorists requiring emergency assistance will receive priority service from the Department. Emergency situations include the following:
 - a. Medical emergencies;
 - b. Vehicle fires; and/or
 - c. Hazardous conditions, which present an imminent threat of injury or death (i.e. spillage of hazardous materials, vehicle disabled in hazardous location, etc.).
2. Officers helping motorists in an emergency may be asked to:
 - a. Provide first aid, if needed;
 - b. Attempt to extinguish any small fires;
 - c. Secure a "safety zone" around any hazards to protect the motorist and other highway travelers; and
 - d. Request the Lexington Fire Department's assistance to:
 - i. Care for sick or injured persons;
 - ii. Extinguish fires; and/or
 - iii. Control and removal of hazardous materials.
3. In medical emergencies, officers shall not escort civilian vehicles as a means of transporting a sick or injured person to a medical facility. Officers shall:
 - a. Notify the Dispatch Center of the need for emergency medical services so an ambulance can be sent; or
 - b. In unusual circumstances where other options aren't going to provide timely aid, and only with the permission of the Commanding Officer, transport the sick or injured person in the police cruiser.

C. Towing Motor Vehicles

1. Anytime an officer discovers a vehicle along the roadway that has been apparently abandoned due to mechanical breakdown or some other reason, the officer shall determine if the vehicle's location presents a hazard to other persons or motorists.
2. If the vehicle is legally parked and poses no hazard, then no further action is necessary provided the officer is satisfied that the vehicle is not stolen and the owner is taking action to remove the vehicle.
3. If the vehicle is illegally parked, unlawfully abandoned, or parked in a hazardous location, officers may tow or remove the vehicle according to department procedures; see also Department policy **61C - Towing Motor Vehicles and Inventory Procedures**.
4. All police tows must be authorized by a Sergeant or higher ranking officer, shall be performed by an approved tow company and recorded in the police journal.

D. Hazardous Highway Conditions

1. Roadway and roadside hazards are contributing factors to many traffic accidents. These hazards include:
 - a. Debris on the road surface;
 - b. Defects in the roadway;
 - c. Defective or missing safety devices;
 - d. Visual obstructions;
 - e. Downed wires;
 - f. Defective or missing street lighting; and
 - g. Abandoned vehicles or other objects located on the roadway in a hazardous location.
 - h. Severe weather conditions involving ice, snow, flooding, etc.
2. When possible, officers shall take appropriate action to eliminate the hazard immediately (i.e. removing debris from roadway, towing abandoned vehicles, etc.).
3. If a road hazard cannot be corrected and poses an imminent threat to public safety, officers should:
 - a. Notify the station of the hazard so that the appropriate agency (i.e. Department of Public Works, utility company, etc.) can be contacted and dispatched to the scene; and

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- b. Secure the area with a police cruiser, emergency lights, flares or other warning devices, which may be available. All pedestrian and vehicle traffic should be directed away from the "safety zone" until the hazard is eliminated.
4. Road hazards that do not present an immediate threat to public safety shall be recorded in detail in the police log. The appropriate agency shall be notified immediately by Dispatch personnel in order to correct the hazard.
5. Vehicles which contain hazardous materials (with no spillage present) must be handled with great care. When any doubt exists about the proper handling of these materials, officers should notify the Patrol Supervisor and, if necessary, request the assistance and expertise of the Lexington Fire Department.
6. If hazardous materials have been spilled, officers should request the immediate assistance of the Fire Department and follow departmental policy on **62A - Motor Vehicle Crash Investigations**